

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 1547

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR BL

SUBJECT: VISIT BY SECRETARY OF ARMY AND CHIEF OF STAFF

REF: STATE 44806 AND LA PAZ 1366

1. WE BELIEVE IT MAY BE USEFUL AT THIS TIME TO MENTION SOME OF THE SUBJECTS THAT MAY BE RAISED BY BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS DURING THE VISIT OF MR FROEHLKE AND GENERAL ABRAMS. THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE MILGRP AND DAO.

A. MILITARY HOSTS CAN BE EXPECTED TO EMPHASIZE THEIR COMMITMENT AND LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT BANZER, BANZER GOVERNMENT, AND THE FPN. WHILE SOME IMPORTANT ARMY AND OTHER SERVICE OFFICERS HOLD STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE GOVERNMENT, BASICALLY BECAUSE OF HISTORICAL ANTAGONISMS AND BECAUSE THEY DO NOT TRUST THEIR MOTIVES, THEY HAVE COME TO ACCEPT THE PARTIES. PRESIDENT BANZER, A MILITARY MAN HIMSELF, IS COMMITTED PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO MAINTAINING THE POLITICAL COALITION THAT NOW GOVERNS BOLIVIA, INCLUDING THE POLITICAL PARTIES, AND HAS EFFECTIVELY THROUGH PERSUASION AND SOME JUDICIOUS TRANSFERS WON WIDE SPREAD MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE COALITION CONCEPT.

B. THE BANZER GOVERNMENT WAS BORN IN VIOLENT REVOLUTION AGAINST WHAT ITS COMPONENTS VIEWED THEN AND STILL VIEW AS THE PROBABILITY THAT BOLIVIA WAS ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING ANOTHER CUBA. THE CONTINUING THREAT OF COMMUNISM INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY IS
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VIEWS AS VERY REAL BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY. THE MILITARY BELIEVES IT HAS COMMON CAUSE WITH THE U. S. BASED ON ANTI- COMMUNISM AND SOMETIMES FEELS THAT THE U. S. IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THE THREAT AS THEY SEE IT, PARTICULARLY IN LATIN AMERICA. RECENT ELECTION RESULTS IN CHILE AND ARGENTINA HAVE CONFIRMED IF NOT INCREASED THEIR FEARS. WHILE ONLY THE MOST EXTREME AMONG BOLIVIAN MILITARY MEN FEAR ARMED ATTACK FROM CHILE, THEY ALL FEAR INFILTRATION OF INSURGENTS AND EQUIPMENT FROM CHILE AND, WITH THE PERONIST VICTORY IN ARGENTINA, NOW FEAR SUCH INFILTRATION MAY COME FROM THAT QUARTER. IN SHORT, THEY NOW VIEW TWO OF THEIR PRINCIPAL NEIGHBORS AS POTENTIAL SOURCES OF A THREAT TO INTERNAL SECURITY BECAUSE OF THE LEFTWARD MOVEMENT IN THOSE TWO COUNTRIES. THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO SEEK TO CONVINCE THEIR VISITORS OF THE REALITY OF THIS THREAT AND TO PLEAD THEIR CASE FOR INCREASED U. S. MILITARY SUPPORT IN THE FACT OF IT. WHILE THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY IS AWARE THAT IT ALREADY RECEIVES ABOUT ONE HALF OF THE U. S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN THE HEMISPHERE, IT VIEWS THE THREAT AS SUFFICIENTLY GRAVE TO WARRANT RECEIVING MORE.

C. WE BELIEVE THE HOSTS WILL TRY TO REFRAIN FROM BEING SPECIFIC ON WHAT ASSISTANCE IT WANTS, ALTHOUGH THE ARMY'S CONCERN THAT THE LONG AWAITED TIPO EQUIPMENT HAS STILL NOT BEEN DELIVERED AS PROMISED MAY COME UP. ANY FIRM INFORMATION THE VISITORS MIGHT HAVE WITH REGARD TO DELIVERY DATES OF THE FIRST TWO REGIMENTS WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATED BY THE BOLIVIANS AND US. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE QUESTION OF AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION MAY ARISE IF THE CHIEF OF THE BOLIVIAN AIR FORCE FINDS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE VISITORS.

D. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GENERAL MENDIETA, WILL

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENLIST SUPPORT FOR HIS AMBITIONS TO RECEIVE AN OFFICIAL INVITATION TO VISIT THE U. S. AS INSTRUCTED, WE HAVE ALREADY INFORMED HIM THAT SECRETARY RICHARDSON'S SCHEDULE DOES NOT PERMIT AN INVITATION IN THE FORESEEABLE

FUTURE, BUT HE MAY ATTEMPT TO APPEAL THAT DECISION OR SEEK SOME OTHER FORM OF INVITATION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT POLITICAL GROUNDS TO URGE AN INVITATION, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND AN INVITATION WOULD BE MARGINALLY USEFUL IN TERMS OF INTER- PERSONAL MILITARY RELATIONS.

E. SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON WHAT BOLIVIAN ARMY OFFICERS MAY RAISE
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HAS BEEN COVERED IN MILGRP MESSAGE 141406 Z MARCH 73 TO

CINCSOUTH.

F. WHILE THEY NORMALLY COULD BE EXPECTED TO LIMIT THEMSELVES
TO MILITARY AND POLITICAL MATTERS, MILITARY HOSTS MAY RAISE
ISSUE OF TIN SALES, ARGUING IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE SUCH
SALES WOULD HAVE.
SIRACUSA

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